

the threat

Herman Kahn has argued that to make ~~it~~/sufficiently plausible that the US would strike first in certain circumstances (the requirement for Type II Deterrence) it must be true that it would be "rational" in those circumstances for the US to do so.

It is the purpose of Soviet Type I Deterrence to deter a rational opponent from striking/~~the SU~~. If Kahn's goal were achieved, the Soviets would be led to expect that under certain ~~sixxxx~~ circumstances ~~the~~ their Type I deterrence would fail: ~~The Soviets would then be~~ to expect this, if not with certainty, at least with sufficient likelihood to deter them from any actions which would bring about these circumstances.

Thus, increasing the plausibility of a rationally-chosen US first strike in a particular situation ~~xxxxxxx~~ corresponds precisely to weakening SU belief in the effectiveness of their Type I Deterrence in that situation. Anything which has the effect of making SU Type I Deterrence look ~~less~~ reliable and effective in a given situation will make a/US first strike appear "more likely" than otherwise to the SU; this can be expected to contribute to the deterrence ~~of~~ of SU actions which would bring about this situation. It would lessen the "attractiveness" of such actions relative to alternatives which did not have this effect. (Thus, the change would act in the direction of deterring these actions; whether or not it actually deterred them would depend on the degree of the effect, and on the strength of the incentives to choose those actions in preference to their alternatives).



The actions which Kahn proposes to deter by the threat of a US first strike are what he calls "extreme provocations." The general nature of these acts is not analyzed in detail in his writings; he gives a number of examples--SU invasion of Europe, an SU H-bomb on London, or the threat of such actions in the form of ultimatums, massive jamming or spoofing of early warning lines--but I will argue later that these various "provocations" offer distinctly different problems from the point of view of deterrence.

In common usage, "provocation" induces a non-rational response: an uncalculated reflex aimed at eliminating or punishing a source of irritation. When Soviet experts draw attention to frequent admonitions in Soviet doctrine that a Marxist decision-maker should not be influenced by attempts to "provoke" him, I suspect that this is the sense of "provocation" involved. In other words, this would appear merely to be <sup>a corollary</sup> ~~part~~ of the basic Marxist doctrine that the decision-maker should at all times act on the basis of rational calculation. But the ~~provocation~~ word "provocation" has been used at Rand--and is used by Kahn--to ~~refer to~~ <sup>which</sup> actions which affect the rational calculations of the opponent in such a way as to favor his rational choice of a nuclear strike. Even the most conscientious Marxist may ~~not shield himself~~ not shield his decision-making from this ~~more general~~ type of "provocation"; to the extent that an opponent can control or influence individual elements which enter into the Marxist's rational calculations (such as, for example, his subjective probability that the opponent himself will strike) that opponent can make his choice of ~~first~~ a nuclear strike "more likely" by making it ~~more rational~~ rational.

American decision-makers, not being Marxists, are not constrained to be rational. They can be "provoked" more variously. But, to make this discussion more comparable to Kahn's, I shall follow him in considering only that sort of provocation which ~~takes the form~~ affects the rational decision-making of an opponent; this might either overstate or understate the "actual" likelihood of a nuclear case in a particular situation, depending on the nature of the non-



non-rational influences on ~~decision~~ that decision.